NOTES ON TAMIL PRONUNCIATION

COMPILED BY

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THESE notes were prepared some years ago in the hope that they might be of some assistance to those who find (as I did) considerable difficulty in reconciling the Tamil we hear spoken in the streets and fields with that which we learnt from Pope's Tamil Grammar.

The notes are chiefly the result of my own observations and deductions ; they do not pretend to be exhaustive ; and, though I have tried to get them verified, I do not suppose they are free from inaccuracy. But, I think, they will not seriously mislead anyone and may be found useful, if only as a stepping stone to further discoveries.

The pamphlet is interleaved with plain pages in case users of it desire to make corrections in it or additions to it. I need hardly say that I shall be glad of any suggestions for correcting mistakes or increasing the utility of these notes.

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NOTES ON TAMIL PRONUNCIATION

I. Pronunciation.

A. *Vowels.*

1. Short *a* (அ) is never as in "flat" (I believe the *a* of "flat" never occurs in any oriental language). It is generally as in "sun." Sometimes, when followed by ன் at the end of a word, if the ன் is nasalised, *a* gets an *e* sound, *e.g.*, அவன் (he) is often *aven* (with nasalised *n*). This however is a vulgarism. The nasalisation (without the vowel modification) is not at all vulgar, and is common enough—*vide* I.C. 14.

A curious modification of அ (*a*) into எ (*e*) is often to be noticed in words beginning with ர (*r*), ல (*l*) or ஜ (*j*), in which the ர, ல or ஜ is followed by அ (such words are generally written as if they began with an இ (*i*) but the *i* is not pronounced and it is convenient to speak of them as beginning with a consonant). Thus இரண்டு (two) is pronounced rendu, இரக்கை (a feather) as rekkai, இலக்கு (a mark) as lekku, ஜபம் (a prayer) as jebam, ஜலம் (water) as jelam, ஜம்பை (a proper name) as Jembai and so on.

The rule is not an absolute one, *e.g.*, இரங்கசாமி is either Rengasami or (more often) Rangasami.

The long *ā* (ஆ) has generally *a* sound as in "far." Before a double *k* it sometimes almost takes the vowel sound of "eye," *e.g.*, பாக்கி (a debt) = báiki. The same is found in the proper names ராக்கியன் and பாக்கியநாதன் and in துபாக்கி (a gun).

2. Short *i* (இ) is much sharper than in English and more like the continental *i*: *cf.* the way some Eurasians and French people say "nice*lee*" for "nicely."

3. Short *i* (இ) in the first syllable, if followed by a syllable containing *a* (அ) or *ai* (ஐ) and if not followed by two consonants, is generally pronounced *a*, *e*, or *o*. *E.g.* திற (open)=tara, tera or tora; இறங்கு (descend)=yerangu or yarangu; விளக்கு (lamp)=veḷakku; இரக்கம் (mercy)= yerakkam; கிழவன் (old man)= kaṛavaṅ; பிணம் (corpse)= poṇam; பிழை (to live) poṛai; and so on.

But இருக்க (to be) is irukka ; இரும்பு (iron) is irumbu ; கிட்ட (near) is kiṭṭa ; சின்ன (small) is chiṉṉa ; and so on.

[*Note.*—பிள்ளை (child)=pullai ; பிடி (to seize)=puḍi. These two are exceptional.]

4. வீடு (house) is sometimes ūdu.

5. Short *u* (உ) in the first syllable, if followed by a syllable containing a (அ) or *ai* (ை) and if not followed by two consonants, is generally pronounced *o* (or wo) and sometimes *e*, *e.g.*, உடம்பு (body) = wodambu ; உயரம் (height) = woyaram (or wosaram—*vide* I.C. 10) ; சுவர் (wall) shevar ; சுமை (burden)= shemai ; குடை (umbrella) =kodai ; குளம் (pool) = kolam ; குளம்பு (hoof) = kolambu ; குறவன் (a Koravan) ; etc.

Contrast குட்டை (pool)=kuṭṭai ; உடுப்பு (clothing)= uḍuppu ; குடுமி (top-knot)= kuḍumi ; குடி (drink)=kuḍi, etc.

6. Final உ (*u*) is generally modified very much like the French in *du*, *pu*, etc., and it is a common mistake to ignore this.

Three limitations to this rule have to be remembered.

(1) As in Telugu, when the syllable before a dative ending in க்கு contains either *i* (இ) or *ai* (ஐ) or is closed by *y* (ய்) the *kku* becomes *kki*. *E.g.*, நாளைக்கு (tomorrow) becomes nālaikki ; நாலு மணிக்கு (four o'clock) becomes nālu manikki ; வாய்க்கு (dative of வாய், the mouth) becomes vāykki ; இன்றைக்கு (today) is innikki ; அன்றைக்கு (that day, " the other day ") is annikki ; and so on.

(2) In the past participles referred to in the analogous rule given in I.C. 6 below the final உ is nearly pronounced *i*.

(3) Practice varies with regard to words containing long or short *u* or *o* in the penultimate syllable. I should be inclined to say that it is not incorrect to modify the final *u* in such cases but that it is not necessary to do so, *e.g.*, போடு, கொடு, குத்து, பூட்டு etc., etc. The final உ of உண்டு (there is) seems never to be modified. And it would seem that in trisyllables the presence of *a*, *e*, or *i* in the first syllable necessitates modification of final *u*. *E.g.*, திருத்து, இருப்பு.

7. முன் (before) is often pronounced " min " and this is seen in many of its derivatives (முந்தி, முன்னிட்டு, etc.).

Similarly புல்லு (grass) is pronounced pillu and மின்னல் (a station on the Madras and Southern Mahratta Railway) is pronounced Miṇṇal.

8. ē (எ) is not the same in pronunciation as the English sound in the word "name." This English sound is really a diphthong (viz., *ei*) while the oriental sound is a pure vowel exactly similar, I am told, to the "continental" *e* in Europe. The nearest equivalent in English, I know, is the sound * a Scotsman makes in saying "there." It is a sound difficult to define and the correct pronunciation must be picked up by practice. A useful example is the contrast between மேலே and வேலை: it is the *ai* (ை) in வேலை and not the ē (ே), which corresponds more exactly with the English vowel found in "name." The nearest transliterations that I can think of for these two words are "mairlair" and "vairlay." These are not quite right.

9. Short *e* (எ) in the first syllable of words beginning with *p* (ப) is often modified in pronunciation into *o* or sometimes *u*. Thus பெட்டி (box) is often potti or puṭṭi ; பெறும் (it is worth) is often porum ; பெண் (woman) = poṇ ; பெட்டை (hen) = poṭṭai, etc.

10. வேணும் (for வேண்டும்: must) is pronounced verṇum (as in English "vernal"). வேண்டாம் (must not) is often vāṇām.

11. With regard to long ō (ஓ), as in the case of long ē (எ), the correct pronunciation is not that of the English long ō sound as in "go." The English sound is really a diphthong (viz., *ō u*), and the Tamil sound is a pure vowel. I am told it is exactly equivalent to the "continental" *o* in Europe, and it very closely resembles the sound in "more" as pronounced by a Scotsman ; or again the sound of "no" as pronounced by some Eurasians. The English beginner's ordinary pronunciation of the two vowel sounds in போட்டோம் is very wrong indeed. The nearest transliteration would perhaps be "pawtawm" which is not quite right.

Short *o* (ஒ) is this long ஓ truncated. It is not at all like the ordinary short English *o* as in "not."

12. Short *o* (ஒ) in கொடு (to give) is *u*, kudu.

13. வைக்கோல் புல்லு (straw) is pronounced vaikkil pillu or vaikkal pillu.

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* I am indebted for this analogy to Mr. Twerdie's Hindustani Manual.

B. Diphthongs.

1. The sound of ஐ (*ai*) is ordinarily explained as equivalent to that in the English "aisle," when it occurs in a first syllable, and to that in the English "maid" when it occurs in any other syllable. There is undoubtedly a difference of this kind in the sound of the letter; but it may be doubted whether the difference between the two sounds is really so great or is correctly described. In the English word "aisle" the diphthong is *ā-i*, in the word "maid" it is *ē-ı*. But the diphthong as found in the first syllable of a Tamil word is a crisper and less prolonged *a-i.*, and is an equally crisp and short *e-i* in any other syllable. Now, though there is a clearly perceptible difference between the two sounds, they more closely approximate to one another than do the sounds in "aisle" and "maid" which are too open and elongated to represent them adequately.

[*Note.*—(1) வை (to place) is an exception, being pronounced not like கை (hand) but with the sound which ை commonly has in any syllable but the first, vei, வைத்து (having placed) commonly becomes "vecchi"; தைத்து (from தை to sew) becomes "tecchi." Similarly ஐந்து (five) is generally pronounced "anji" (*cf.* I.C. 6).

(2) *ai* in an unstressed syllable (*i.e.*, in any syllable but the first) must be regarded as a short vowel and is always pronounced lightly. Indeed it is sometimes pronounced so lightly as to be almost equivalent to a (அ), *e.g.*, நனைந்து (wet) is pronounced almost as nananji; (*cf.* C. 6).

(3) The ஐ in the second syllable of இல்லை (not) is often pronounced as a plain open but not very long *e.*]

2. ஆய் (*āy*) in second singular of a verb is always pronounced in ordinary talk as in "say."

3. ஆய் (*āy*) as an adverbial suffix is often pronounced colloquially as *ā*, *e.g.*, மெதுவாய் (softly, gently) methuvā.

C. Consonants.

1. A single க unless at the beginning of a word or after ங (n) is generally aspirated. The adverbial suffix ஆக is pronounced āgha (*cf.* German weg) or even āha. This is especially noticeable among gentlemen.

2. க is sometimes vulgarly changed into வ (*v* or *w*), *e.* ., முதுகு (back)= muthuvu : போகுது (abbreviation for போகிறது) = povuthu ; போகேணும் (abbreviation for போகவேணும்), pōveṇum : this is vulgar.

3. The normal sound of ச is not accurately represented by the English *sh* which is more like the Tamil ஷ, though the Tamil ஷ is pronounced rather further back in the mouth than the English *sh*. The Tamil ச is, I believe, always pronounced with the tongue placed as in pronouncing *ch* in "church." The letter is pronounced (in different words) as *s*, *sh* or *ch*; but the tongue must be placed as indicated above for each of these. In some words the sound varies with different speakers and districts; but in most words the letter has a correct value which has to be ascertained in each case. ச்ச is always *ch* as in "church."

4. த is a difficult letter and is often mispronounced by Englishmen.

(*a*) When it occurs singly in the middle of a word it is generally the *th* of "this," *e.g.*, அது.

(*b*) When double (த்த) it is either (i) the *tth* of "*cut thin*" (கத்தி: knife has exactly this sound) or (ii) the *dth* of "had *this*," *e.g.*, in சாத்தியம் (power); சித்தம் (readiness); பத்திரம் (safety).

(*c*) At the beginning of a word it has the sound either as in *b* (i) or *b* (ii), *e.g.*, துணி (cloth), tthuṇi; தைரியம் (courage), dthairiyam.

(*d*) Occasionally in the middle of a word a single த has a *t* sound. It is then very difficult to pronounce. The tongue has to be placed as in *b* (i) and a single *t* has to be pronounced in that position, *e.g.*, பிரதி (every); ஸ்திரீ (woman).

(*e*) The து in the neuter forms புதியது (new), பழையது (old), சிறியது (small), பெரியது (big), மெல்லியது (soft), becomes "*su*," and those words are pronounced pudisu, palasu, sirisu, perisu, mellīsu. Similarly the த in the past tense of செய் (do) is sometimes pronounced as an *s* by Brahmans (செய்தேன் = sheysen).

5. ந்த is generally the *nth* of *shun them.* Sometimes. in Sanskrit words, it is the *ntth* of *can't think* (*e.g.*, in பலவந்தம்: violence).

6. Final த்து and ந்து, especially when in the past participle of a verb, are ordinarily corrupted into something very like "*ochi*" and "*nji*" respectively, when they close a syllable containing *i*, *ai*, or ending in *y*: *e.g.*, பிடித்து (having seized), puḍicchi; அழைத்து (having called), aṛaicchi; குனிந்து (having bent down), kuninji;

நனைந்து (having become wet, nanainji; காய்ந்து (having become dry), kaynji.

[But contrast பத்து (ten), patthu; நடந்து (walking, having walked), naḍandthu. In these there is no *i* or *ai*, in the preceding syllable and the preceding syllable does not close with *y*.]

7. ற்ற is correctly pronounced "tr"; but it is generally pronounced like த்த, *e.g.*, காற்று (wind), kātthu; மாற்று (change), matthu, etc. This *tth* is often changed into *cchi* in the third neuter singular of the past tense (as in I.C. 6), *e.g.*, ஆக்கிற்று (it made—past of ஆக்கு): ākkicchi; போச்சு (it went) and ஆச்சு (it became) are from போயிற்று and ஆயிற்று, by a similar process, plus that of running the vowels together.

8. ன்று is correctly pronounced *ndru*, நன்றாய் (well), nandrāy. But it is generally pronounced *nn*, *e.g.*, பன்றி (pig), panni; கன்று (calf), kannu; என்று (having said), ennu; என்றேன் (I said) ennēn; நன்றாய் (well) is often nannāy or nannā.

9. As in the case of ச and த, so ப in words derived from Sanskrit has various values according to the letter it transliterates. This one Tamil letter has to do service for Sanskrit *p*, *ph*, *b* and *bh*. Thus பிரியம் (pleasure) is for Sanskrit priyam, பலம் (strength) is for balam, பலன் (fruit, result) is for phalam, and பாரம் (weight) is for bharam.

10. ய (*y*) in the middle of a word sometimes becomes *s* in vulgar talk, *e.g.*, முயல் (hare), mosal; உயரம் (height), wosaram (*vide* I.A. 5).

[*Note.*—An analogy to this is the corruption of Tamil பெயரு (name) into Canarese *hesaru*, and of Tamil வெயில் (sunlight) into Canarese *bisilu*.]

11. For ழ a safe substitute colloquially is ள (ḷ).

12. ழ is sometimes turned into *y*, *e.g.*, மழை (rain) = mayai, பழம் (fruit) = payam. This is vulgar and occurs chiefly on the East Coast.

13. ழ is sometimes turned into *s*, *e.g.*, இழுத்து (pulling), isithu: hence "panka isi" (pull the punkah) for punkah iḻu or iṟu. This is also vulgar.

14. Final ன் *and* ம் are very often nasalised as in French (bien, etc). This is particularly noticeable in third person singular masculine of verbs, *e.g.*, செய்தான் (he

did) with nasalised ன். Also in substantives of the first declension, *e.g.*, in அவன் (he), மனிதன் (man), etc., and in substantives ending in ம்; *e.g.* மரம், பழம்.

[*Note.*—When nasalised *n* is preceded by short *a* as in அவன், the *a* is sounded like *e* in vulgar talk—I.A. 1].

In பழம் (fruit) and similar nouns the ம் is generally nasalised.

D. Odds and Ends of Pronunciation.

1. ஆர்கள் of the third plurals of verbs is often pronounced correctly, but more often corrupted. The educated or refined corruptions are "āgha" and "ārlu" or "ál": the vulgar corruption is "āngo" or "āngal," *e.g.*, செய்தார்கள் is politely "sheythāgha" or "sheythārḷu" or "sheythāl," vulgarly "shethāngo" or "sheythāngal." ஈர்கள் of the second plural is in the same way vulgarly corrupted into "īngo" or "īngal." Educated people either pronounce it correctly or corrupt it into "īḷu" "īgha" or "ēghad."

2. ர்கள், the plural form of nouns of the first declension, is generally pronounced "ngo" or "ngaḷ" by vulgar people. Educated people sometimes corrupt it into "ho" or ga. Thus அவர்கள் (they) is often "avango," "avangal" or "avaho" or "avaga." A further corruption is met with in vulgar talk when the *r* is retained and the க (g) is nasalised into the bargain, *e.g.*, மனிஷர்கள் (men) is sometimes pronounced "manisharango."

[*Note.*—Another common colloquial form for அவர்கள் is அவாள் (avāḷ).]

3. The same nasalisation as occurs before கள் is noticed in other plurals, as well as the same ellipsis of the ள், *e.g.*, வீடுகள் (houses) = vīḍungaḷ or vīdungo. This is vulgar.

4. Final *l* is similarly often dropped, *e.g.*, in செய்தால் (if you do) and its corruption செய்தாக்கால்.

5. Final ள் is sometimes dropped in words like அவள் (she) and சொன்னாள் (she said).

6. The ர் in words like வளர்த்து (having bred), உயர்த்தி (having raised), நிமிர்த்தி (having straightened), and even in பார்த்து (having seen) is often dropped, and the words become vaḷatthu, wosatthi (I.A. 5 and C. 10), nimitthi, pātthu.

This is rather slovenly and it is much better to pronounce the *r*. If the *r* is pronounced it is slightly rolled, as though a very short vowel intervened between the ர் and the த், *e.g.*, valaratthu; and a beginner had better consciously introduce a short vowel of this kind in order to get into the way of pronouncing his "*r*" properly.

7. Very similarly ற் often disappears before க in such words as நிற்க (to stand): *nikka*: விற்க (to sell), *vikka*.

8. வர இல்லை (did not come) is often run into "varallai"; so also other combinations of infinitive and negative, *e.g.*, போக இல்லை, povallai (I.C. 2); அடிக்க இல்லை, adikkallai, etc. In such cases there is no stress on the "all" syllable.

9. It is not uncommon to hear a modified *u* pronounced lightly after a final ர்: and this is a good plan to adopt in order to get the liquid clear: *e.g.*, பேரு (name); செய்திரு (thou didst). (*cf.* I.A. 6.) பயிரு (a crop).

[*Note.*—பயிரு and மயிரு (hair) should not be pronounced like the English words "pyre" and "mire." It must be remembered that they are trisyllables, and that the *r* has to be pronounced.]

10. வரவேணும், அடிக்கவேணும், போடவேணும், etc., are often colloquially pronounced vareṇum, adikkeṇum, pōdeṇum, etc. In fact this is the common way of pronouncing வேணும் after an infinitive. The *e* is pronounced short and has no emphasis.

E. Emphasis.

It is the ordinary practice to emphasize the first syllable in the root of a word, *e.g.*, நனைந்து (having become wet), na'nanji; தோட்டங்கள் (gardens), tthō'ṭṭangaḷ; உடம்பு (body), wo'dambu; இருக்கிறது, i'rukkirathu; அக்கிரமம் (injustice), a'kkramam.

The neglect of this rule is one of the commonest mistakes met with in an Englishman's Tamil and it is a particularly ugly one. Its commonest form is to be heard in emphasising the second syllable of words like நடந்து (having walked).

It should be said that இ and உ occurring before ர, ல and ஜ (which are not allowed to begin a word in Tamil) do not take any emphasis in those words in which the இ

or உ are merely a jumping off place for pronunciation of the following consonant, *e.g.*, இரண்டு (two), இலேசு (easy), உரொட்டி (bread). The choice between இ and உ depends on the vowel of the next syllable. If it is *a*, *i*, or *ai* இ is used ; if *u*, *o* or *ou* உ is used [*cf.* I.A. (i)].

[*Note.*—(1) Of course however the இ or உ take the emphasis when they have a value of their own, which is more generally the case, *e.g.*, இரக்கம் (mercy.)

(2) Similarly in many words like பிரபு (lord), திரவியம் (wealth), பிரதி (each) (standing for Sanskrit prabhu, dravya, prati) where the *i* following the first syllable is inserted merely to separate the two consonants, the emphasis is not transferred to it but remains on the original first syllable prábhu, drávyam, práti.]

Of course long vowels occurring in the middle of a word attract this emphasis from the first syllable, *e.g.*, சந்தோஷம் (joy) ; சம்பாதிக்கிறது (acquires) ; சம்பாஷணை (conversation) ; similarly புறா (dove) and மஹா (great) take the emphasis on the second syllable.

Suffixes which emphatically alter the meaning of a word are emphasized as well as the root, *e.g.*, case endings and verbal endings. Thus தோட்டங்களுக்கு, tthóttangalúkku; தோட்டங்களுக்காக, tthóttangalukkágha; செய்தார்கள்) shéydhárgal.

II. Ordinary corruptions of Verb Forms.

1. *Present tense.*—The corruptions of the present tense are various and confusing. The distinguishing mark of the present is the middle link க்கிற or கிற அடி-க்கிற-து or போடு-கிற-து. The persons and moods are formed by adding different terminations to this middle link. In actual practice nearly all these forms differ very much in the spoken as distinct from the written language. This appears to be due to either (*a*) the கி or (*b*) the ற or, (*c*) both these letters disappearing from the middle link.

[*N.B.*—க்கி may be either (in essence) due to "Sandhi" as in நடக்கிறது or indicative of causations (அழிக்கிறது).]

(*a*) It is easy enough to see how கி falls out, as it is a soft aspirated letter [*cf.* I.C. (i)]. The simplest instance of its disappearance would be such a case as

போகிறது, which becomes போறது. The whole present tense in such a word is similarly modified—போறேன், போறாய், போறான், போறோம், போறீர்கள், போறார்கள். Now in nearly all words that take கி and not க்கி in the present, the கி drops out in conversation. We have thus செய்கிறேன், sheyṟēṉ; போடுகிறேன், pōdṟēṉ; ஆக்குகிறேன், ākkṟēṉ. But in verbs whose roots end in *ḻ* or *ṉ*, a *d* is usually introduced to strengthen the sound before the ற. Thus we have பண்ணுகிறேன், paṇḍṟēṉ; சொல்லுகிறேன், shoḻḍṟēṉ; என்கிறேன் = enḍṟēṉ.

[*N.B.*—It is curious that in correct Tamil enḍṟēṉ is the past tense (என்றேன்). In colloquial Tamil the past tense is pronounced ennēn.]

All the present moods and persons are formed from the new present roots thus produced.

வருகிறேன் (I come) and தருகிறேன் (I give) are curiously corrupted into வாறேன் and தாறேன். Sometimes one has plain வரறேன், தரறேன் (pronounced varrēṉ, tarrēṉ).

(*b*) ற is vulgarly dropped in the third singular neuter present tense of strong verbs (*i.e.*, those which use க்கி in present) or in those like விற்க (sell) and நிற்க (stand) which are analogous (I.D. 7); thus நிற்கிறது (it stops) = nikkuthu; விற்கிறது = vikkuthu; இருக்கிறது = irukkuthu; அடிக்கிறது = adikkuthu, etc. The final து is also sometimes dropped, *e.g.*, இருக்கு (it is).

This dropping of the ற is very common in the third singular neuter: in the other persons, it is less common except in Tinnevelly where one constantly comes across it.

Instances of the ற being dropped in a weak verb are found in போகுது (it goes); சாகுது (it dies); நோகுது (it hurts); வேகுது (it is hot); கூகுது (it cries). These are, I believe, vulgar. Perhaps they should come under (*c*), since all these verbs have a latent *g* in the root.

(*c*) Sometimes the கி and the ற both drop out, *e.g.*, அழுகிறது (it weeps) is vulgarly pronounced "ayuthu" (ழ becoming y—*vide* I.C. 12).

2. *Present participle noun* செய்கிறது (doing), போடுகிறது (putting), etc., form their dative cases differently in conversation and in writing respectively. Written it is செய்கிறதற்கு, etc. In conversation it is செய்றத்துக்கு, etc. The form is a strengthening of செய்றதுக்கு, etc., which is

intelligible. Why the த is doubled I cannot say, but it is always so in the present. Curiously in the past participle noun they have a simple துக்கு (not the grammatical தற்கு) with only a single த, *e.g.*, செய்ததுக்கு. Of course this also applies to the other dative forms in உக்காக—செய்றத்துக்காக, செய்ததுக்காக, etc.

3. *Past three Singular.*—In verbs forming their past tense like ஆக்கு the three singular generally takes the form ending in ற்று, which is pronounced "cchi." ஓடிற்று (it ran), pronounced ôdicchi, is the common form from ஓடு and so on. The form in ற்று (pronounced "cchi") is also vulgarly used in verbs which grammatically cannot take that form at all, *e.g.*, வந்திச்சி (it came) for வந்தது; விழுந்திச்சி (it fell) for விழுந்தது, etc. I have been told (though it seems hardly credible) that these vulgarisms are corruptions of வந்து விட்டது, விழுந்துவிட்டது. I am also told that a similar corruption is used in the Tamil of well-bred people, with the difference that the விட்டது becomes வுடுத்து or விடிச்சு and that thus we get phrases such as வந்துடுத்து, விழுந்துடுத்து; and even போயுடுத்து (*i.e.*, போய்விட்டது).

4. பண்ணினேன் (I made) is run into paṉṉēṉ.

5. The conditional ending in ஆல் (செய்தால் = if you do) is often turned into ஆக்கால் (presumably something to do with காலம்=time). Thus we get செய்தாக்கால், போட்டாக்கால், etc. In pronouncing these, the last *l* is generally dropped and the last syllable pronounced lightly, the emphasis being divided between the root and the penultimate syllables, *e.g.*, செ'ய்தா'க்கா, கூ'ப்பிட்டா'க்கா (*cf.* I.D. 4).

III. Auxiliaries.

1. The commonest auxiliaries are விடு and கொள்ளு. The first seems to give the idea of completeness or clearance, and the second of success. And கொள்ளு is often used in a reflexive sense, *e.g.*, நான்குத்தி கொண்டேன் = I got myself inoculated. It is also used as a mark of the present tense (*vide* IV. 21). Both these auxiliaries are a good deal mutilated in common talk.

2. The வி of விடு is nearly always elided. Thus we have taranthuṭṭeṉ for திறந்துவிட்டேன் (I opened); kuḍuthudrēṉ for கொடுத்துவிடுகிறேன்; pōṭṭuṭṭu for போட்டுவிட்டு; and so on.

Another common corruption of this auxiliary is found when it is used with a negative participle in a conditional clause, in which case விட்டால் becomes—ட்டா, ட்டே or (vulgarly) ட்டி. Thus இல்லாவிட்டால் (if not) becomes இல்லாட்டா, or இல்லாட்டி.

3. The past tense of கொள்ளு in combination is often changed into கிட்டேன் or sometimes கிண்டேன், or கிணேன், or even ண்டேன். The past participle is often changed into கிட்டு or கிண்டு, or even ண்டு. The last is common among Brahmans.

The present of கொள்ளு in combination is generally corrupted into a mere கிறேன். Thus the compound verb எடுத்து கொள்ளு (pick up) is conjugated (present) எடுத்து கிறேன்; (past) எடுத்துகிட்டேன், எடுத்துகிண்டேன், எடுத்துக்கிணேன் or எடுத்துண்டேன்; (participles) எடுத்துகிட்டு or கிண்டு or எடுத்துண்டு; (future) எடுத்துகொள்ளுவேன்.

The imperative கொள் is often abbreviated into "*ko*"; எடுத்துகொ (pick up) (*cf.* I.D. 5.)

4. வா (to come) has a curious auxiliary use indicating a course of action which has been going on for some time and still continues. *E.g.*, நான் பத்து வருஷமாய் இப்படியே செய்துகொண்டு வருகிறேன்: I have been doing exactly the same as this for the last ten years.

வந்து is also used without any particular meaning as an introduction—especially when a man speaks before thinking what he is going to say. *E.g.*, நான் வந்து—followed by hesitation, and then some sentence in agreement with the நான்.

5. கொடு (give) is used often as an auxiliary with the sense of doing something for somebody else or of *obliging* somebody, and often implies a certain degree of patronage. *E.g.*, கற்று கொடு (to teach) (contrast கற்று கொள்ளு = to learn); சொல்லிகொடு (to teach or instigate); நீந்தி கொடு (teach to swim); செய்து கொடுத்தேன் (I did it for him); செய்து கொடுங்கள் (please do it for me).

6. A common form found in Coimbatore is எழுந்தெரிச்சு for எழுந்து (having got up.) I am told this is a corruption for எழுந்திருந்து.

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IV. Phrases, etc.

1. அப்படியா ? Is that so ? "Vraiment"?

2. அவ்வளவுதானா ? Is that all ? no more ?

3. நேற்று ஒரு மனிதனை பார்த்தேனே, அவன் யாரு ? who is the man I saw yesterday ?

The important point in this form is the emphatic ஏ at the end of the first half of the sentence. This ஏ is always followed by a pause. The form is very common and is really the usual way of expressing any relative clause of any length, *e.g.*, "Bring me the book which I put on the table yesterday afternoon" would be நேற்று சாயங்காலம் மேசைமேலே ஒரு புஸ்தகம் போட்டேனே அது கொண்டா.

4. The emphatic suffix ஏ is often used when stating an objection in argument or when reasoning with some one politely. It is most useful.

ஆனால் அதற்காக பணம் வேணுமே. But surely we want money for that (which you seem to have forgotten).

இல்லையே : surely not ! you can't mean that !

The combined emphatic suffix தானே is similarly used when the verb is omitted. ஆனால் பொள்ளாச்சி ரொம்ப-தூரம்தானே : But surely Pollachi is a long way off.

5. It doesn't matter whether you come or not : நீ வந்தாலும் சரி, வராதே போனாலும்சரி. (This is a very common usage).

6. The two cancel one another : இதுக்கும் அதுக்கும சரியாய் போச்சு.

7. ஆனால் with a finite verb makes a conditional, and is very commonly so used :—

வேணும் ஆனால் : If you want it.
முடியும் ஆனால் : If you can.
வந்திருந்தேன் ஆனால் : If I had come.
வருவேன் ஆனால் : If I shall come.
ஆனாலும் is similarly used meaning "though."

8. எங்கே வந்தாய் ? *Lit.* where have you come ? usually means "what do you want ?" "Why have you come ?"

9. என்று (having said) is often used to mean "thinking" or "with the intention." இங்கே வேலை செய்ய-லாம் என்று வந்தேன் : I came thinking I might get

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work here. இதுக்குள்ளே செத்துப்போயிருப்பான் என்று வந்தேன்: I came thinking he would have died by this time.

10. வேணும் என்று, wantonly, without proper reason.

Q. சாட்சிகள் ஏன் அப்படி சொல்லுகிறார்கள்? = Why do the witnesses say so?

A. வேணும் என்று சொல்லுகிறார்கள்: They say so wantonly.

11. செய்திருப்பேன்: I would have done so. செய்திருக்கமாட்டேன்: I would not have done so.

12. Do you understand what I said? நான் சொன்னது {தெரிந்ததா? / அர்த்தம் ஆச்சா?}—*not* தெரியுமா or அர்த்தம் ஆறதா.

13. The verbal participial nouns (especially the present) have some curious uses. The following are common enough. என்ன பண்ணுகிறது? = What is to be done next? (Common in moments of doubt). எங்கே போகிறது? = Where ought one to go? Where is it right (or usual) to go?

அப்படியா பண்ணுகிறது: (*a*) Are you doing (or going to do) *that*; (*b*) Is that the proper thing to do?

அப்படிதான் பண்ணுகிறது: (*a*) Yes, I am going to do that or (*b*) Yes, that's the proper thing to do.

வேலைக்காரனை கூப்பிடுகிறதா? Shall I call the servant?

நீ வந்தது எப்போ? When did you come?

அப்படி செய்கிறதாயிருந்தால்: If, he / you / they intend to do that or if that is your policy.

The last of these forms is exceedingly common and exceedingly useful.

14. தவிர, ஒழிய, அல்லாமல் are equivalent terms. ஒழிய is a rather high and literary word; தவிர and அல்லாமல் are more frequently used in ordinary conversation, the former being the commoner.

These have three main uses:—

(i) நீ அப்படி செய்தால் {ஒழிய / தவிர / அல்லாமல்} = unless you do.

(ii) அவனை அடித்ததும் { ஒழிய / தவிர / அல்லாமல் } என்னையும் அடித்தான்

He struck not only him but me also.

(iii) அப்படி செய்யலாமே { ஒழிய / தவிர / அல்லாமல் } இந்த வழியாய் போகக் கூடாது. You may do so if you like, but you must not go along this road.

இந்த ஊரை பார்க்கலாம் என்று வந்திருக்கிறேனே தவிர வேறே எந்த காரணத்துக்காகவாவது நான் வரவில்லை: I came to see this village, but I did not come for any other reason whatever.

[*N.B.*—This last form is only used when the "but" introduces a negative sentence. It is also to be noted that in pronouncing such phrases the pause comes after the ஒழிய, தவிர, அல்லாமல். Similarly the word before the தவிர, etc., has the emphatic ஏ suffixed. It is an exceedingly common form and exceedingly useful.]

15. தானு is very commonly used in putting a question when the verb is omitted. சரிதானு? Is that all right?

16. "Before he came" or "comes" is generally அவன் வாராதத்துக்கு முந்தி, instead of அவன் வந்ததுக்கு முந்தி or வருகிறதற்கு முந்தி.

17. It is worth while to do so: அப்படிச் செய்தால் பிரயோஜனம் உண்டு. It is not worth while to do so: அப்படிச் செய்தால் பிரயோஜனம் இல்லை.

18. சட்டென்று: quick. It is an onomatopœic word (*cf.* குசுகுசென்று: whispering) and is very common, though sometimes not easily recognizable; generally pronounced chaṭṭeṉṉu.

19. போல் (like) has several curious uses—

(*a*) மழை பெய்யும்போல் இருக்கிறது: It looks as if it is going to rain.

(*b*) அவன் செய்தால்போல் தோன்றுகிறது: It looks as if he has done it.

[*N.B.*—செய்தால்போல் is pronounced செய்தாப்பொலே (with a short *o*). A common instance of this form is அடுத்தா பொலே (for அடுத்தால் போல) near or adjoining.]

(*c*) அவன் தூங்குகிறான்போல் இருக்கிறது : It looks as if he is asleep.

(Generally pronounced தூங்குகிறாப்பொலே with a short *o*).

> எறும்பு கடிக்கிறாப்பொலே அம்மை குத்துகிறார் : He inoculates you as if it was an ant biting you.
>
> அவன் கொலை செய்வான்போல் இருக்கிறது . It looks as though he would commit a murder.

(*d*) கொலை செய்தவன்போல பேசுகிறான் : He talks like a man who has committed a murder.

(*e*) போல is used sometimes but vulgarly as an adjective instead of the grammatical போன்ற, *e.g.*, உன்னைப்போலவர்களை அடிக்கவேணும் : People like you ought to be beaten. அவனைப்போல ஆள் : A man like him.

20. This is different from that = இது வேறே, அது வேறே.

21. The present tense of a Tamil verb is often used with a future significance. செய்கிறேன் means more often "I will do it" than "I am doing it." Indeed if it is desired to emphasize the present time கொண்டு is generally introduced. நான் எழுதிக்கொண்டிருக்கும்போது = while I $\frac{\text{am}}{\text{was}}$ writing. நான் வேலைசெய்துகொண்டிருக்கிறேன் = I am working.

22. The interrogative ஆ is not always put at the end of the sentence. It is generally put after any word which it is desired to emphasize. அவனா வந்திருக்கிறான் = Is it *he* that has come? பணமாவேணும்? = Is it money you want?

23. தேவை இல்லை literally means "there is no need or deficiency." It is commonly used as equivalent to the English "not bad" "very fair" with the same implication of "very good" as is found sometimes in the English phrase. The two words are run together and pronounced "tēvalai."

E.g. (1) இந்த பயிர் எல்லாம் தேவை இல்லை : These crops are not so bad—in fact are very good.

(2) நீங்களும் என்னோடேகூட வந்தால் தேவை இல்லை: It wouldn't be a bad thing if you too were to accompany me.

[*Note.*—An alternative form common in Tinnevelly is தாவு இல்லை, "there is no deficiency" (pronounced "tavalai"). This is used in the same sense as தேவை இல்லை and is by some said to be the more correct Tamil.]

24. ஒரு மாதிரி (a manner) and ஒரு மாதிரியாய் (in a manner) are commonly used like the English "so so" to mean "fairly good," or "fair," or "not very good," *e.g.*, (i) Q. குதிரை நன்றாய் போகிறதா?: Does the horse go well? A. ஒருமாதிரியாய் போகிறது: It goes pretty well; (ii) அவன் ஒரு மாதிரி மனிதன்: He is not much of a fellow.

25. இது (it) and இதுவாய் are used in the same way as the English "what's its name" "what d'you call it," *e.g.*, அந்த இது கொடு = "Give me that what d'you call it"; ரம்ப இதுவாய் இருக்கிறது = "It's very what d'you call." This is as slovenly as its English equivalent and quite as common.

26. நேற்றுதான் வந்தான் = He did not come until yesterday. Contrast with this நேற்றுவரையிலும் வரவில்லை = He had not come till yesterday (but whether he has come since I can't say).

27. பிழைத்தேன் (I have lived or survived) is used like the English phrase "saved again" or "you have saved my life" to indicate satisfaction at a danger averted or a success attained. நான் பிழைத்தேன் (pronounced poḷaicchēn) is often heard from a successful petitioner.

28. புத்தி வந்தது is commonly used of a man's having "learnt a lesson" or come to his senses. இல்லை, சாமி; புத்தி வந்தது. "No, sir. Don't do that. I've learnt my lesson (and won't do it again)."

என்ன செய்தாலும் அவனுக்கு புத்தி வருகிறதில்லை. (vārathillai);

Whatever you do to him he won't learn to behave.

29. நான் போய்விட்டு வருகிறேன் (nān pōyittu vārēn) or நீங்கள் போய்விட்டு வாங்கள் (nīngo pōyittu vāngo), as the case may be, are the ordinary Tamil equivalents for the English "good bye."

30. நான் சொன்னாலும் சரி தாசில்தார் சொன்னாலும் சரி, நீ சொன்னபடிக்கு செய்யவேண்டும், Whether I tell you or whether the Tahsildar tells you, you must do what you are told.

பணக்காரராயிருந்தாலும் சரி எளியவராயிருந்தாலும் சரி எல்லாரும் சாகவேண்டும்.

All men whether rich or poor must die. This is a very common and very useful form to express "whether or ."

31. "The same" is often translated in tamil by "ஒரே" ("one and the same") and "அதே" ("the very same").

நீங்கள் எல்லாரும் ஒரே குடும்பமா ?

Do you all belong to the same family ?

நேற்று ஒரு மனுஷன் இங்கே திரிந்து கிட்டிருந்தான். இன்றைக்கு அதே மனுஷன் வந்திருக்கிறான்.

A man was wandering round here yesterday. To-day the very same man has come.

அதே மாதிரி = in the same way.

The use of "அதே" (emphatic form of the neuter "அது") as an adjective is curious but perfectly good ordinary Tamil.

32. The use of a future adjectival participle with "படியாக" in order to indicate purpose or result is pretty well known.

அவனுடன் சண்டை போடும்படியாக நேர்ந்தது.

It so happened that I had to quarrel with him.

கோபிக்கும்படியாக திட்டினான்.

He abused me so as to annoy me.

புலியை எல்லாரும் பார்க்கும்படியாக கூண்டில் அடைத்தார்கள்.

They put the tiger in a cage so that all might see.

Less well known is the similar use of the adjective படியான.

Examples—

கடினமான கல்லையும் உடைக்கும்படியான உளி.

A chisel such as can break even hard stone.

வந்த ஆபத்தை தடுக்கும்படியான உபாயம் செய்தான்.

He made a device to obviate the danger.

பெரிய பாம்பையும் அடிக்கும்படியான தடி.

A stick fit to beat a big serpent.

சாகும்படியான ஸ்திதியில் இருக்கிறான் or சாகும்படியாக இருக்கிறான்.

He is like to die.

33. இருந்தாலும் இருக்கலாம்.

It may conceivably be so.

இருந்தாலும் இருக்கட்டும்.

"Let it be so—It can't be helped." "It does not matter." Of an event one would prefer not to have happened but is resolved to make the best of.

இருந்தால் இருக்கட்டும்.

Let it be so—"I don't care whether it is or not." Of an event to which one is indifferent.

Similarly "வந்தாலும் வரலாம்," "வந்தாலும் வரட்டும்," "வந்தால் வரட்டும்" and so on.

34. The word "round" is translated in different ways in Tamil according to its sense.

A round plate = வட்டமான தட்டு.

A round ball = உருண்டையான பந்து.

I walked round the town = ஊரைச்சுற்றி நடந்து போனேன்.

To turn round is திரும்பு or திருப்பு as the case may be.

To turn round and round (*i.e.*, revolve) is—

(1) transitive, சுற்று, சுழட்டு.
(2) intransitive, சுற்று, சுழளு.

Words which may be confused with the above are புரட்டு (turn over, transitive—pronounced peraṭṭu); புரளு (turn over, intransitive—pronounced peraḷu); உருட்டு (turn over and over—*i.e.*, revolve horizontally—transitive); உருளு (turn over and over—*i.e.*, revolve horizontally—intransitive); சுருட்டு (roll up—transitive); சுருளு (roll up, intransitive).

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